

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/747,971
Amendment filed September 15, 2004
Reply to OA dated June 18, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 7 and 10 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated June 18, 2004.

Claims 7 - 10 and 12 - 20 are pending in this application, claims 16 - 20 having been allowed. Claims 1 - 6 and 11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 7 - 10 and 12 - 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in item 3, page 2 of the outstanding Action with respect to the language of independent claims 1 and 7. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

In response, each of claims 1 and 7 has been amended in order to correct the noted informality. Should the Examiner still has any remaining issue concerning the language of claims 1 and 7 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned representative in order to conduct an interview so as to help expedite the processing of this application.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/747,971
Amendment filed September 15, 2004
Reply to OA dated June 18, 2004

In view of the claim amendments submitted herewith, the withdrawal of the outstanding indefiniteness rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

As to the merits of this case, claims 7 - 10 and 12 - 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) based on Honda in view of Zucker, and further in view of the Japanese Publication No. 11-320231. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

In item 7, page 3, the Examiner had indicated, in the last sentence thereof, that: “[a]pplicant’s independent claims 7, and 10 would define over the art rejections, if the workpiece is recited as being a segment of a ring.”

Accordingly, in order to help expedite the processing of this case, the applicants have amended each of independent claims 7 and 10 in order to include the language that the claimed work is “a segment of a ring,” as suggested by the Examiner. The outstanding 35 USC 103(a) rejection is thus moot.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/747,971
Amendment filed September 15, 2004
Reply to OA dated June 18, 2004

In view of the above, independent claims 7 and 10, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, should now be similarly allowable.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding obviousness rejection under 35 USC 103(a) based on Honda in view of Zucker, and further in view of the Japanese Publication No. 11-320231 is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

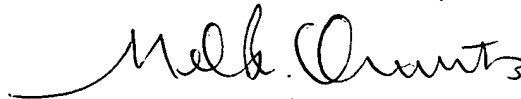
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/747,971
Amendment filed September 15, 2004
Reply to OA dated June 18, 2004

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,
ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS,
HANSON & BROOKS, LLP



Mel R. Quintos
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 31,898

MRQ/lrj/ipc

Atty. Docket No. **001695**
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



23850

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE